

Touch

keeping in

February 1996

Goal of Building Campaign Within Reach

■ Rev. David Farrell

What began last September as a series of fundraising visits for the UFMCC/MCCLA Capital

COVER STORY

Campaign has become a triumphal "good will tour" of the Fellowship by UFMCC Founder/Moderator, Rev. Elder Troy Perry. In just four short months, September through December, 1995, the 24 MCC's visited have contributed \$246,000 in cash and pledges toward the purchase of the new home for MCC Los Angeles and UFMCC Global Headquarters in West Hollywood, California. Twenty five more MCC's in Florida, Tennessee, Louisiana, Alabama, Texas, and North and South Carolina are already scheduled visits from January through March, 1996.

The New Year opened with a flurry of invitations from MCC's for a Capital Campaign visit by Rev. Elder Perry, as word continued to spread about the beneficial effects of these presentations on local churches. The presentation, entitled "Vision... For The Next Generation"

is updated and personalized for each congregation visited.

The campaign tour visits are provided at no cost to local MCC's. To maintain cost-effectiveness, tour segments are arranged in clusters of MCC churches in a given area. Due to this, and in order to accommodate his other UFMCC obligations, Rev. Perry's only stipulation for a campaign visit is that he gets to choose the date!

The March issue of *Keeping in Touch* will be a real "collector's item"! A full-color issue devoted to the Capital Campaign, it will feature pictures and articles related to the fundraising efforts of our two campaign strategies: MCCLA's "Dare to Dream" and UFMCC's "For The Next Generation," overseen by



Capital Campaign Co-Chairs, Ivy Bottini and myself. In addition to a complete report on the status of our building fund, the issue will include an updated list of MCC's already visited, with totals for each church, MCC's currently scheduled for visits, and those MCC's who have invited Rev. Perry to visit them and are waiting for tour dates to be assigned. Be sure to look for your MCC on the list!

Plans for reconfiguring and remodeling the complex for our use, to be accomplished in phases over

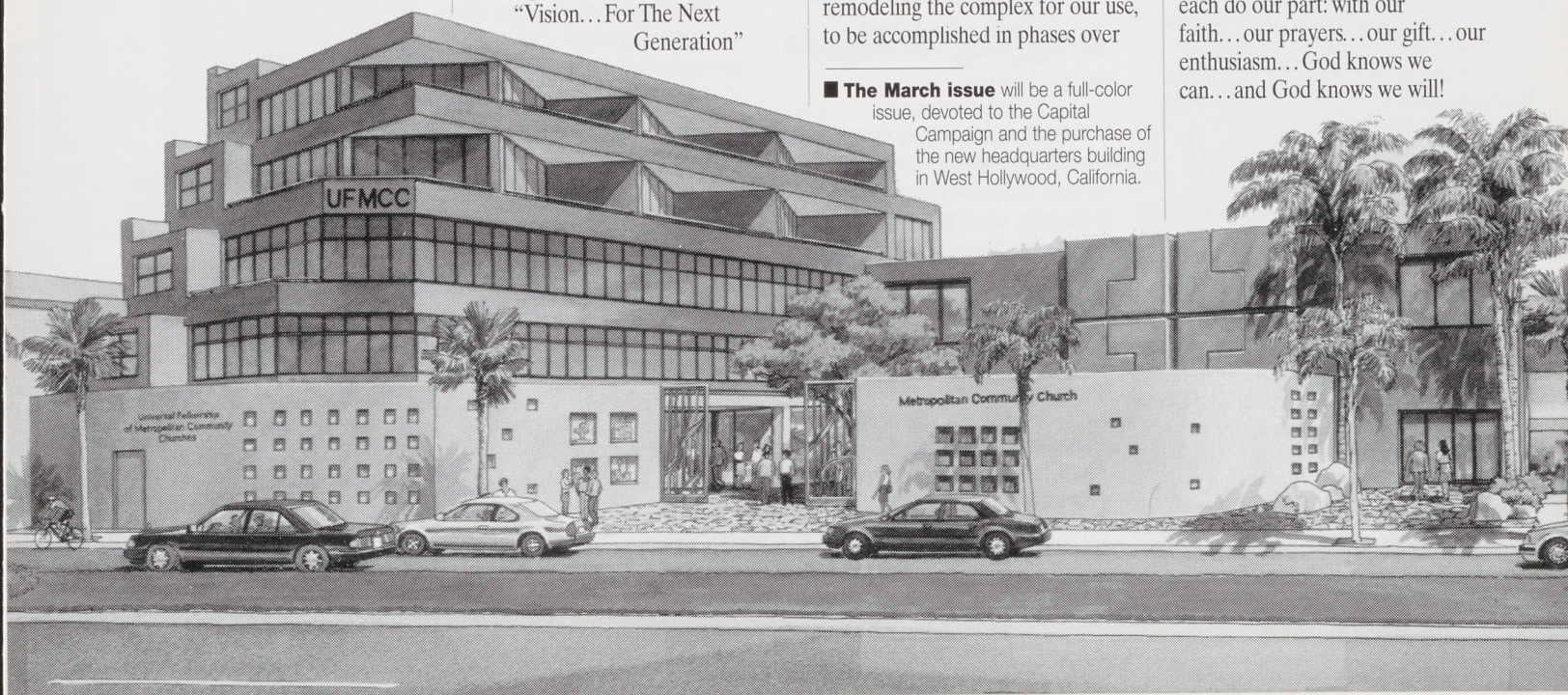
the next several years, will also be outlined. The real highlight will be the full-color rendering by our architects of the new complex as it will look upon completion. You are going to love this!

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to make steady progress toward our goal, our first-ever major fundraising campaign. For those of you who are awaiting return calls from the campaign about tour visits, potential "major gifts," or other information, I have some good news: As of January 1st, I have been working full time on the Capital Campaign. I hope to clear the backlog of letters and calls very quickly.

Please continue prayers for the success of the campaign. There is still much to do. Our long term goal is to pay off the property over the next three years. Our immediate goal is one million dollars plus closing and move-in costs. God is good. In June 1995 we had nothing... our building fund is now at the \$1 million mark! Of this amount, we have approximately \$700,000 in cash and the balance of in pledges (over 3 years) from our members. By Friday, March 1, we must have an additional \$300,000 cash to complete this transaction!

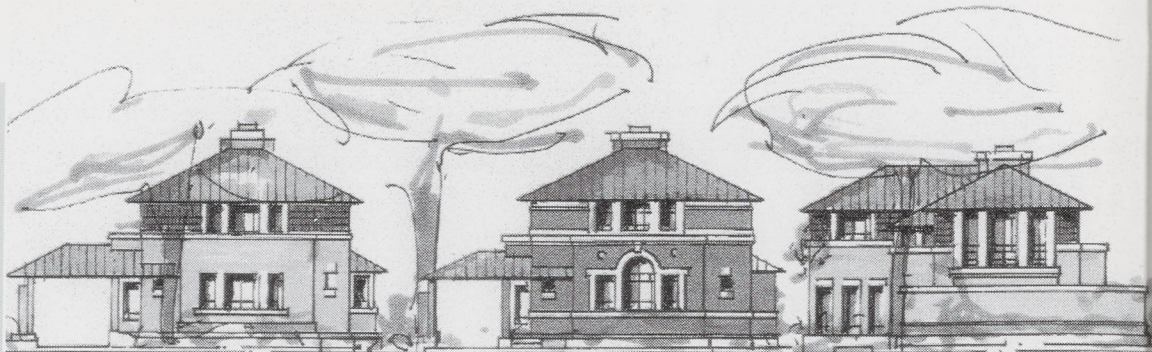
We CAN do this... If we will each do our part: with our faith... our prayers... our gift... our enthusiasm... God knows we can... and God knows we will!

■ **The March issue** will be a full-color issue, devoted to the Capital Campaign and the purchase of the new headquarters building in West Hollywood, California.



Appointments, Awards and Adoptions . . .

Rev. Robert Finch begins his new ministry at MCC of Living Faith in St. Louis, Missouri. ■ **Rev. Don Clarke** will be installed as pastor of Joie De Vivre MCC in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in February. ■ **Rev. Philip Mathews** recently joined the staff of MCC Washington, DC. ■ **Rev. Karen Dickman** has been appointed interim pastor of MCC in Charlottesville, Virginia. ■ **Rev. Christen Chew** has been elected pastor of Vision of Hope MCC, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. ■ **Rev. Ron Helms** was elected pastor of Open Arms MCC in Rochester, New York. ■ **Rev. Dan Lee** resigned as co-pastor of MCC of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania effective January 1. ■ **Rev. Lin Stoner** was installed as pastor of Reconciliation MCC, Grand Rapids, Michigan, on December 17th. ■ **Rev. Ken Hull, Sr.** has been installed as pastor of Angels of Hope MCC, Green Bay, Wisconsin. ■ Congratulations to **Rev. Roberta Dunn** and her spouse **Beverly Minnix** on the arrival of their daughter **Sarah Foster**, born in China on March 14, 1995, and adopted on October 18th. ■ **Alice** and **Jim Schoen** were honored with the 1995 Faithful Servant of the Year Award by MCC Dayton Parish, Dayton, Ohio. ■ MCC of the Quad Cities, Davenport, Iowa, gave the Kevin Carney Community Service Award to **Connie Venema**. Connie has been active in the community by working, volunteering, raising money, and organizing various projects. In addition, **Joe D.** and **Mary G.** received the Rev. Robert Darst Church Service Award. They are both people of strength working in the background. ■ **Rev. Lynn Hallett**, retired from North Pines MCC, Yelm, Washington, was honored and nominated for a local Kiwanian of the Year award. Hallett is secretary/treasurer of the Kiwanis and has lived in Yelm for 12 years. ■ **Marty Ruggles** received the Volunteer of the Year Award from Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas, Texas, for her many hours of service per week to the church. In honor of her dedication, she received a statue of a mother eagle. ■ **Leslie Johnson** and **Morris Jackson** were named co-executive directors of the MCC Greenville, South Carolina, AIDS Outreach Ministry, effective January 1.



EXCITING DISTRICT OPPORTUNITY

Exciting Project in South Central

Rev. Ed Paul, District Coordinator of the South Central District, has announced a project that he terms, "more exciting than I could have ever dreamed possible."

The district has made plans for a building project on a parcel of land which it owns in Houston, Texas. Through a gift from the estate of longtime district member, Dr. Tom Reveley, the district will be able to build three homes on the parcel, and fund the entire project through the sale of only two of the structures. That will provide a building to house the district offices, free of debt.

"And we may even have additional funds for ministry in the district!" Rev. Paul explained. Plans call for the district office structure to be configured as conventional housing, making it possible to sell it as such in the future.

"I am simply thrilled that we will be able to use this property to both improve our financial standing and better facilitate district ministry."

MINISTRY OF GLOBAL OUTREACH

Struggling for Nigeria

■ Rev. Judy Dahl

The journey to visit our people in Nigeria has been an arduous, frustrating task. In December, plans were finalized to send two people to Nigeria, Mr. Bernie Barbour, the director of Ministry of Diversity In Spiritual Community, and Stephen Fund, the director of World Community Builders. Both Stephen and Bernie have for weeks had their tickets in hand, their malaria pills and shots taken, their itineraries determined, hotel reservations made, and their UFMCC materials packed. They were scheduled to leave January 3, 1996, when they received word that

visas would not be granted without a written invitation from the Nigerian Minister of Internal Affairs. This information did not filter down until three days before Christmas.

Once we were able to reach Rev. Sylvanus Maduka in Nigeria, he was able to go to the appropriate offices to accomplish the beginning phase of this task. One week later, a telephone call from Rev. Maduka informed us that the letter from the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Minister of Health would be telexed to the Nigerian Embassy in Washington, D.C., inviting Bernie and Stephen to Nigeria. We were told this process could take up to two weeks to accomplish.

In the meantime the east coast of the U.S. has been plagued with a blizzard which has shut down government facilities. Gratefully both Bernie and Stephen are "on call" and willing and ready to go as soon as all the visas come through. Like so many of us, they have a real passion to see this trip through. Like so many of our churches and individuals in MCC, we know the importance of this trip. We want so much to make this connection with our people in Nigeria. It has been so long in coming.

This is one of those times when we "shall renew our strength... we shall mount up with wings as eagles... we shall run and not grow weary... we shall walk and not faint." We wait upon God to see this through with us.

UFMCC ON THE NET

Bridging the Distance

MCC'ers world-wide are getting together on Tuesday evenings, at 9 p.m. EST to chat on the Internet Relay Chat

Channel #MCC. Testimonies, sharing prayers, exchanging technological and theological ideas and generally building community have been the hallmark of the channel since its inception in November, 1995. All people on-line are welcome to join on #MCC. For more information, please e-mail ufmcc@trends.ca or visit the Web Site at <http://www/trends.ca/ufmcc>.

MINISTRY OF GLOBAL OUTREACH

Satellites to Europe

During the past year, Rev. Roy Beaney, the European District coordinator, and Rev. Judy Dahl, the administrator for Global Outreach, have been discussing the possibility of working together to develop a UFMCC outreach to other countries in Europe. The European District is geographically located in the best position to reach out, but currently lacks the financial



resources to develop additional outreach. Global Outreach is that entity in the denomination which is responsible for the development of ministry in countries not connected to a district. But because it is housed in Los Angeles, it is not as geographically accessible to Europe as those who reside in the European District.

Rev. Dahl traveled to the European District Conference in Kent, England, in November to discuss the possibility of linking the European District and Global Outreach in a collaborative effort to work with new countries in Europe. This merger-like arrangement took on a new look and new life at this conference. After considerable thinking, meeting, and discussing with the District Committee, it was agreed to name Rev. Caroline Blanco as the person to facilitate the Global Outreach Satellite from her office in Paris, France. Her partner and the newly elected assistant district coordinator, Catherine Chemarin will work with her to liaison information to the European District Committee. Catherine will also work with Rev. Dahl and Rev. Blanco in assisting with their communication and translation needs as they occur between the Satellite and Global Outreach.

Rev. Blanco is involved in the Gay and Lesbian European Alliance and has been at the forefront of leadership in the gay Christian movement in Europe for many years. She speaks several languages and the geographic proximity of France to countries where MCC is not yet in existence creates an excellent framework for an outreach satellite.

Spain has been selected as the first area for planned strategic growth. Rev. Blanco was born in Spain, speaks Spanish fluently and has a number of connections from which to begin an MCC outreach. During past months, Rev. Dahl has received several letters of inquiry concerning the possibility of

■ **Above Left**—Rev. Blanco shares a moment with a young attendee at the European District Conference. **Lower Left**—District Coordinator Rev. Roy Beaney and Rev. Neil Thomas stand in the chapel at St. Joseph's Chapel at the Aylesford Priory in Kent, site of the European conference.

A FELLOWSHIP OF CONGREGATIONS

MCC Pittsburgh

Pastor: Rev. Roberta Dunn

Background: Rev. Dunn began her church life at MCC Pittsburgh in 1975. She was a founding member, served as student clergy, and participated in the church's satellite outreach project in Morgantown, West Virginia prior to becoming pastor in 1986.



Staff: Part-time administrator, paid musician

Gender Mix: 60% male, 40% female

Members: 121

Meeting Arrangements: Rent space from other church, meet on Sunday evenings.

Greatest Ministry Challenge: Constant struggle to maintain a presence and to reach the lesbian/gay community in an extremely conservative region.

Accomplishment Most Proud Of: Witnessing the transformation of individual lives.

Recent Success: The relocation to a new worship space, more visible, more accessible.

Top Future Priority: Creating greater visibility within the community through appearances at functions and events, and working with community agencies and other resource groups.

If I Could Change One Thing About UFMCC: I would focus more energy on grassroots needs, create more support resources for districts and local churches. Recent progress in that direction is great.

a UFMCC presence in Spain. In addition, Rev. Stuart Harrison from Bournemouth, England plans to move to Spain in late 1996. It is his hope and prayer to develop a retreat facility on land he acquired near Barcelona. Rev. Harrison has worked as a city planner, is learning to speak Spanish, and has a life-long dream of developing this ministry in Spain.

The European District Conference was held at St. Joseph's Chapel at the 13th-Century Aylesford Priory, and was attended by over 100 conference registrants.

MINISTRY OF GLOBAL OUTREACH

Launching a Satellite

In order for a Satellite office in Paris to communicate more efficiently and frequently with Global Outreach in Los Angeles, we're looking for a couple of donors to assist us in providing computer upgrades for the Paris office computer. It's a 286 PC. We need to upgrade it to at least a 386 and to purchase Windows. We want to communicate by e-mail and this is presently not possible.

If you can assist with the software, hardware or money to make this a reality, please contact Rev. Judy Dahl at UFMCC Headquarters.

TECHNOLOGY AND HIV/AIDS

AIDS Ministry on the Net

Selected UFMCC AIDS

Ministry resources are now available on the Internet, as well as a bi-weekly column from Rev. Steve Pieters. Three pamphlets, *HIV/AIDS: Is It God's Judgement?*, *Spiritual Strength for Survival*, and *Choose Life* can be accessed at The Body, Body Health Resources Corporation's WEB site. In addition, Rev. Steve Pieters, field director of UFMCC AIDS Ministry, will be a regular columnist for The Body.

The URL for The Body's WEB site is:

<http://www.thebody.com>. Rev.

Pieters' column can be found under "Insight," and UFMCC AIDS Ministry pamphlets can be accessed under "Religion and HIV/AIDS."

The Body is cyberspace's first one-stop shop for reaching AIDS experts, organizations and publications worldwide.

"We want to do more than inform. We want to create a global community for people concerned with AIDS," said Jamie Marks, founder of The Body. He hopes that The Body will be the first place online where anyone concerned with AIDS will look for resources dealing with its medical, cultural, legal, and political aspects.

"There are some AIDS resources online, but they're fragmented, and you really have to know where to look. The Body has everything in one place," Marks said.

UFMCC AIDS Ministry joins a number of other content providers for The Body, including the AIDS Action Council, the American Foundation for AIDS Research, the Gay Men's Health Crisis, Johns Hopkins University AIDS Service, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, and Treatment Action Group.



DOING JUSTICE

Rev. Mel White

When I still looked good in short pants and a bare chest, those many moons ago, my family camped on the Merced River in Northern California. I can still remember lying on a grassy bank in the hot sunshine

staring at silvery, speckled trout swimming in the crystal-clear waters. One year, we were horrified to discover that a factory upstream had poured tons of toxic pollutants into the water. The clean, unclouded current had turned murky yellow and smelled of dead fish and chemical sludge. Fortunately, the people who lived on that river mobilized their forces. They used petitions, lawyers, a boycott, and the ballot box to save their beloved stream.

As your minister of justice, I have to say it again: The souls of our various nations are being polluted by a toxic cloud of ignorance and intolerance against God's gay and lesbian children that leads directly to suffering and to death for the people we serve. The primary polluters are Catholic and protestant leaders so committed to their current anti-homosexual course that they can't deal honestly with the growing mountain of evidence that homosexual orientation is not a choice or something to be changed, but a gift from God to be accepted, celebrated, and lived with integrity.

Are there pastors, priests, or politicians in your town who pollute the environment with their own toxic flow of ignorance and intolerance? Take your stand against the poison that cripples and kills our sisters and brothers. When you hear voices poisoning the minds and hearts of your neighbors, copy or tape the untruth to have an accurate record. Then call, write, or visit the polluter. Share the truth in love. If the polluter refuses to hear you (in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-17), then, write a letter to your newspaper editor, call your radio and television stations, the mayor's office, the ACLU, the FCC, your local ministerial association, the gay press, the good folks at P-FLAG, and BCS41@aol.com or GLAAD. Mobilize a network of concern! Do something, anything. Justice is at stake.

In 1996, I'm on my way back to Virginia Beach, to Lynchburg, and to Colorado Springs. We have to take a stand against these primary sources of international toxic pollution. Join me in this journey towards justice. Take your stand. Too many souls are being crippled. We cannot be silent while poisonous clouds of untruth spew forth. It's our stream, too. Let's work to see that the water turns crystal-clear again.

A FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

God, Hear Our Prayers

Rev. Karen Gregg and her partner **Sue Kirkland** and their 5 children would like us all to pray with them for God's healing of Karen's cancer.

■ **Rev. Ed Paul** is currently in the Philippines visiting MCC Manila. He was asked to follow up from his trip last year to help facilitate the work of new pastoral leader **Edgar Mendoza** and to continue building relationships with the UFMCC.

■ **Rev. Juan Francisco Barrera**, the Pastor of El Tamarindo ICM in the Dominican Republic has begun a tutoring school for children in their village. They have 44 children attending reading and writing classes! Please keep the success of this vital new ministry in your prayers.

■ **Rev. Elder Hong Tan, Ravi Verma** and **Rev. Judy Dahl** have travelled to South Africa to meet with churches there seeking UFMCC affiliation. Please keep them in your prayers!

■ Prayers are requested for **Rev. Tom Bohache** and his family as they grieve the passing of his mother on Christmas morning.

Notes of sympathy can be sent to Tom at MCC Northern Virginia, 7245 Lee Highway, Falls Church, Virginia 22046.

■ Keep in prayer the family and friends of **Rev. Geoffrey Walker**, retired UFMCC clergy in Sydney, Australia, who died on January 7, 1996. Geoff died in his sleep after many years of illness and pain.

■ Prayer is requested for **Rev. Jeanne Teague** and her family as her father passed away in November.

■ Prayers are requested for the upcoming General Council meetings from March 11 through March 19 at the Burbank Hilton in Burbank, California.

CLASSIFIED

24 HENRY GUESTHOUSE is a serene, non-smoking environment close to everything in San Francisco's Gay Castro District. 1-800-900-5686; 415-864-5686; Fax: 415-864-0406.

NOW AVAILABLE: UFMCC Bylaws, revised at General Conference XVII, July 1995, are now available from the UFMCC Resource Center for \$1.50 each plus shipping. Please call 213/464-5100 to place your order.

LIVING FULLY WITH HIV/AIDS

CD of Hope

Positive Voices, a chorus comprised solely of individuals who are HIV positive, is one of the many programs of the music ministry of the Cathedral of Hope MCC of Dallas, Texas.

Positive Voices was founded in August, 1994 by Jackson Myers. On December 1, 1995, they distributed their first CD, "Windows of Hope," released to coincide with World AIDS Day. Their music's primary focus is the theme of hope, strength, encouragement, and faith.

"God-given, hope-filled music is what furthers us in our journey. We pray that the music of Positive Voices will lead you toward the hope that will sustain you through all the many diseases of life," says Jackson Myers, who continues to direct Positive Voices.

The CD is available through Sources of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road, Post Office Box 35466, Dallas, Texas 75235. Phone 214/351-1901, 800/501-HOPE, or fax 214/351-6099.

IT'S BEEN JUST GRAND

D. J. Retires

D. J. Bowling, mailing assistant for the UFMCC for six years, has decided



to retire and move to Texas. D.J. has been an integral part of the headquarters office as she handled the collating, stuffing, labeling, posting, and other areas of the mailing room. We thank D.J. and her spouse Jean Kolterman, who has been a great volunteer, for all their hard work and support, and wish them God's many blessings as they leave us. We will miss you!

UFMCC VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

UFMCC Seeks Volunteers

General Conference XVII saw the adoption of major changes in UFMCC's structures and systems. One of the components of this shift was the development of a process for the determination of district boundaries, the establishment of a "geographic

review board" to facilitate and oversee this process.

The Board of Elders is looking for qualified volunteers to serve on this board. The qualifications are: excellent analytical and communication skills; ability to mediate and negotiate; understanding of UFMCC; experience in the needs of local churches; bilingual ability is helpful; local cultural awareness. Please send resume to Rev. Elder Darlene Garner, Clerk of the Board of Elders, at UFMCC Headquarters.

STRATEGIC GROWTH INITIATIVE UPDATE

Building Upon Our Strengths

■ **Rev. Elder Don Eastman**

Five target churches have now begun to plan for future growth through the UFMCC's



Strategic Growth Initiative. These Metropolitan Community Churches in New York City, Tampa, Florida, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Chicago, Illinois and Hinsdale, Illinois, will be joined later this year by other MCC's in Portland, Oregon, Sydney, Australia and Los Angeles, as the first round of target churches reaching out to double within the decade. Here's an update on the work of Metropolitan Community Church of Tampa.

On January 11th to 15th, the pastoral staff and lay leadership of Metropolitan Community



■ **The process of** strategic growth requires a church to perform a thorough inventory of its strengths and weaknesses. The leadership of MCC Tampa met with Rev. Elder Don Eastman to formulate a plan to accomplish its goals for growth and maturity.



Church of Tampa, met with Rev. Elder Donald Eastman to engage in a process of strategic planning toward the goal of becoming a congregation of 1,000 within the next decade. During the eight-year pastorate of Rev. Karen Ducham, this vibrant church has effectively passed previous plateaus of 100 and 200 members, and is now moving beyond the "200 Barrier." In mid-1995, the congregation moved from its old location, one of the earliest church buildings owned by an MCC, to a new facility conveniently located in central Tampa near a major freeway. This local congregation now finds itself well prepared to launch a new era of outreach and inclusion that will highly impact the dynamic, growing Tampa Bay area.

Strategic planning begins with careful consideration of a church's values, mission and vision for its future. The leaders of MCC Tampa first discussed the most cherished principles and beliefs that have guided the congregation. Values of inclusion over exclusion, God's unconditional love for all, love and forgiveness of self and others, the right of every person to dignity and justice, the priesthood of believers empowering all to Christ-centered

Profile for

Members of M
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Worship Ser

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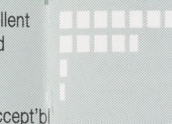
Music Prog

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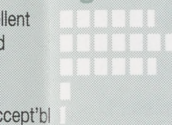
Profile for Strategic Growth

Members of MCC Tampa provided information and rated the performance of different aspects of their church, to be used in a strategic plan:

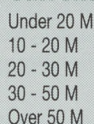
Worship Services



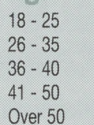
Ministry Program



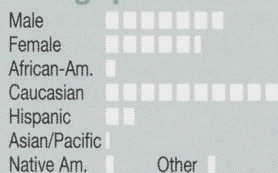
Current Income



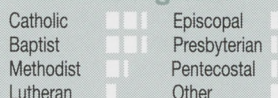
Age



Demographics



Church Background



ministry and a commitment to community outreach are the core beliefs and principles held by this church.

Upon this foundation, the group produced a clear mission statement and reached consensus on a powerful vision to become a church of 1,000, recognized as a leader in winning understanding and acceptance of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons in the Tampa community-at-large.

With a clearer sense of direction for the future of MCC Tampa, its leaders were then able to take an inward look at the church, considering both its strengths and weaknesses. Prior to this planning meeting, 243 congregants had completed a survey questionnaire. Results provided a wealth of demographic and evaluative data. Additionally, Senior Pastor Ducham and her staff had assembled an extensive needs assessment study to inform the planning process. One immediate picture from this information is of a local church with very high-quality

ministries. Strengths quickly became obvious. For instance, respondents rated the quality of the worship services very highly. In the words of one leader, "It feels good to hear we are doing a lot of things right." The group was also able to identify some areas of weakness where improvement was needed.

Armed with this information, local church leaders were now able to identify strategic issues which would impact the church's ability to achieve its vision. Strategic issues are challenges that ask, "Should we do something different to move closer to our vision?" Such an issue should build upon the church's strengths and focus on something that is not presently being done. It could involve an entirely new program or activity, or might be a substantial improvement of an existing activity.

The leadership of MCC Tampa selected three strategic issues around which projects will be developed to help achieve its vision: excellence in music, aggressive community outreach, and a comprehensive stewardship program. Each of these issues builds upon the strengths of the church's present ministry and leadership. Three project teams will now build strategies for change in each of these areas.

The leaders of MCC Tampa have set an initial goal of reaching 360 in worship by the end of 1997, using projects for change in each of the three targeted areas. At the same time, this congregation will continue its course of high quality ministry in worship, care groups and outreach. Pastor Ducham comments "We now have a much stronger sense of direction, and there is very strong ownership of this direction. We are working together as a team."

BENCHMARK/CELEBRATION

Samaritan Marks 25th Anniversary

On Friday, December 1, 1995, during a celebratory gathering of Samaritan staff, trustees, UFMCC leadership, supporters and friends, the winning ticket of Samaritan Institute's 25th Anniversary raffle was drawn in Lewisville, Texas. The winner of the raffle is Larry A. Fortune of Jacksonville, Florida. The winning ticket was sold by Rev. Marie Fortune. The award, a trip for two anywhere in the world where American Airlines flies, was donated by Cynthia Marquart, the President of Envoy Travel in Chicago, Illinois.

THE CHURCH AND HIV/AIDS

Sydney Honors Volunteers

A glittering evening at Paddington Town Hall was the occasion for the First Annual New South Wales State World AIDS Day Community Service Awards presentation. Among the recipients were four members of MCC Sydney, who were recognized for their contributions in assisting people living with HIV/AIDS who are in need. Stuart Dunkley has dedicated his retirement to caring for those who are terminally ill, particularly those with HIV/AIDS. Irwin Diefenthaler has worked for several years as manager of the Out of the Closet Emporium, which is a second-hand shop that raises money for the church's projects and provides furniture and household items free to people with HIV/AIDS. Colin Wiseman is employed by the church as the coordinator of the Manna Pantry, which provides free food for people with HIV/AIDS who sometimes cannot make their disability pension stretch. Rev. Greg Smith, the pastor, and district coordinator for Australia, has spent a large amount of his ministry in organizing needed services through the church. Greg has often been the person who sees the need and organizes to fill it.

These awards are recognition of not only individuals in the church, but also of MCC Sydney's ongoing work in the area of assisting people living with HIV/AIDS. In addition to the Manna

FEBRUARY CHRONICLES

Top 20 Tithes

December 1995

1. Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas \$7,655.57
2. Sunshine Cathedral MCC, Ft. Lauderdale \$2,941.18
3. MCC of the Resurrection, Houston \$2,855.25
4. King of Peace MCC, St. Petersburg \$2,182.13
5. St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville \$1,836.36
6. MCC Washington, Washington \$1,824.98
7. Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton \$1,569.10
8. MCC New York, New York \$1,441.05
9. MCC San Francisco, San Francisco \$1,242.15
10. First MCC of Atlanta, Atlanta \$1,217.00
11. MCC Los Angeles, Los Angeles \$1,205.11
12. MCC Tampa, Tampa \$1,057.54
13. MCC Huntsville, Huntsville \$1,048.76
14. MCC Long Beach, Long Beach \$1,012.45
15. All God's Children MCC, Minneapolis \$946.36
16. St. John's MCC, Raleigh \$833.34
17. Harvest MCC, Denton \$801.13
18. Holy Cross MCC, Pensacola \$763.15
19. Agape MCC, Fort Worth \$759.07
20. MCC Key West, Key West \$756.95

(These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters.)

Top 20 Per Capita

December 1995

1. MCC Huntsville, Huntsville \$42.29
2. MCC Johnson County, Shawnee \$35.45
3. MCC of Greater Hayward, San Lorenzo \$30.97
4. Safe Harbor MCC, Memphis \$28.57
5. MCC Long Beach, Long Beach \$28.44
6. Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton \$26.91
7. MCC Pueblo, Pueblo \$26.17
8. Gentle Souls MCC, Kansas City \$24.36
9. New Life MCC, Charlotte \$23.16
10. MCC Los Angeles, Los Angeles \$22.95
11. MCC Family in Christ, Fort Collins \$20.93
12. Harvest MCC, Denton \$20.75
13. MCC New York, New York \$20.33
14. Spirit Song MCC, Little Rock \$20.30
15. Pikes Peak MCC, Colorado Springs \$20.16
16. Christ Chapel MCC, Santa Ana \$20.11
17. MCC in the Valley, North Hollywood \$19.71
18. Church of the Holy Spirit MCC, Des Moines \$19.55
19. Faith Eternal MCC, Springfield \$19.51
20. MCC of the Palm Beaches, Palm Beach \$18.94

(These figures reflect the average individual weekly offerings to the local church.)



A FELLOWSHIP OF ACTIVITY

Arlington, Armadillo, and Alabama . . .

MCC Diablo Valley, Walnut Grove, California has moved into new quarters at Walnut Creek United Methodist Church. ■ **MCC of the Ozarks** in Fayetteville, Arkansas needs choir robes and other vestments. If any church would like to help them out with surplus, call Paul Smith at 501/444-9692

■ A group of sixteen people in **Rapid City, South Dakota** are ready to affiliate with UFMCC as a mission. They have a Native American pastoral leader who has been serving the group and is investigating transferring his credentials to UFMCC. ■

Congratulations to **Trinity MCC**, Arlington, Texas, as they move another giant step closer to completing their own church home. They unanimously selected a designer and a builder. ■

Congratulations to **Wichita Falls MCC**, Texas, as they dedicated their new building on January 14, with special guest Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson. ■

In one of the most expensive cities in Europe to purchase property, **MCC Paris**, France, with 100 members, has purchased their own church building which is a store front. ■

Excel of the Armadillo reports they had an entirely Spanish-speaking table at their recent weekend retreat. A new team is currently being birthed in Mexico. ■

Praises to **St. John's MCC** in Raleigh, North Carolina on their 20th Anniversary in February. Weekend highlights include a concert February 23 featuring Rev. Delores Berry, David & Jane, Randa McNamara and Marsha Stevens. ■

Jesus MCC, Indianapolis, Indiana, has begun a new Clown Ministry for their church and community, with a weekly ministry at Parkview Nursing Home. ■ Following a gift from Mark Chattaway, a member of the Bloomsbury Baptist Church, London, England (who for the last 8 years has hosted **MCC North London**) a series of three half-page advertisements has been placed in a U.K. national lesbi/gay publication. The advertisements have telephone, mail and e-mail information, voice mail and web site. Found on: <http://www.bluenet.co.uk/blue/christmas>. ■

Covenant MCC, Birmingham, Alabama, recently said "Yes, let's buy!" That was the decision of members present at their congregational meeting concerning the purchase of a former Birmingham wedding chapel facility.

Pantry and Out of the Closet Emporium, the church provides Sunday meals to those in need. These meals have engendered a reputation for being quite sumptuous, consisting of appetizer, entree, and dessert. In addition, meals are offered on special days such as Christmas and Easter for those with no family ties. For those with no family through rejection or distance, these meals offer celebration and community support.

Memorial services are held on the first Sunday of each month to celebrate the lives of those who have died. At the service, memorial banners are displayed (a mini-quilt) and a memorial candle burns throughout.

MCC Sydney is often called "The AIDS Church," by some as a put-down. Rev. Smith observes, "We are proud of that name.

Why do we feed people? Because they are hungry. This is the work that God calls us to do."

ANOTHER RECORD SUCCESS

Christmas Eve at Toronto

Over 3,000 worshippers gathered at Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall for MCC Toronto's tradition of Christmas Eve, the largest and most successful ever. The official number admitted by the box office was 2,910, with standing room only. More than 400 others were turned away for lack of space. The hundred-voice Festival Choir and other individuals on stage brought the attendance figure to over 3,000.

This is MCC Toronto's sixth annual service. Toronto Mayor Barbara Hall and other city digni-

■ **Above** - Rev. Jay Neely, GLAD district coordinator, Rev. Maureen Killoran, keynote speaker, and Rev. Frank Scott, pastor of MCC Ashville.

Below - MCC Toronto packed 'em in again for their annual Christmas Eve service.

A FELLOWSHIP OF CONGREGATIONS

Christ Covenant MCC

Pastor: Rev. Glenna Shepherd

Background: Rev. Shepherd was one of the founders of Christ Covenant in 1992.

Staff: Part-time administrator, part-time musician

Gender Mix: 70% female, 30% male

Members: 136

Meeting Arrangements: Rent converted office space which seats 160. Meets Sunday mornings and Sunday evenings.

Greatest Ministry Challenge: Facility, facility, facility! You can't grow without a facility, you can't afford a facility until you grow. Christ Covenant has just begun a building fund.

Accomplishment Most Proud Of: Successfully crossing the plateaus from small to mid-size, and watching the church mature into a lay-centered organization with appropriate layers of responsibility.

Recent Success: Impressive amount of programming for the size of the church. Successful small group program, educational programs, well-developed music program including a band, children and youth ministry, and active community outreach.

Top Future Priority: Facility, facility, facility!

If I Could Change One Thing About UFMCC: I would emphasize the need for the Fellowship to educate people in conflict resolution, and urge a commitment to a better process in this area. To focus on the destructive behaviors that undermine ourselves as individuals and churches.

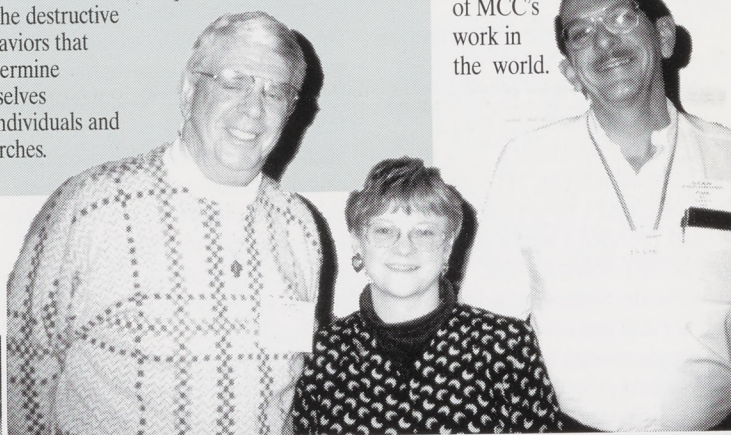
taries were present at the event.

"This year was so successful that we're planning to have a second service next year," commented Pastor Rev. Brent Hawkes.

UFMCC DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

GLAD District Conference

Members and delegates of MCC churches in the Gulf Lower Atlantic District gathered during November in Ashville, North Carolina, to hold their annual district conference. Keynote speaker of the event was Rev. Maureen Killoran, pastor of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ashville, North Carolina. Rev. Killoran shared warm accolades and affirmations of MCC's work in the world.



At the same time she challenged the UFMCC to "get out of the huddle." She challenged those present to let others from different sectors of the faith journey, who are willing comrades, work alongside each one of us in our struggle for human rights.

"Sometimes when people struggle as members of the inside group, they can miss the love and support of some perceived as outsiders." She asked, "What can you see as a spectator to a huddle?" She reminded delegates and church leaders that, "we're not alone. Some spectators want to help us win the game!"

HONORING AN INNOVATOR

Rev. Cherry Leaves UFMCC Staff

Rev. Kittredge Cherry will be leaving the staff of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan



Community Churches due to illness. Kit has served as the public relations associate and ecumenical

officer since January 1, 1991. In this position, she has worked to continually upgrade *Keeping in Touch*, organized the Hands Around the God Box demonstration at Stonewall 25,

spoke at 1994 International Lesbian Conference, and accompanied Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson to two World Council of Churches meetings. Kit helped Rev. Wilson establish ties with South African congregations and spearheaded the publicity for the recent reprint of Rev. Troy Perry's new book *The Lord is My Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay*. Despite this busy schedule, she found time to co-edit the book *Equal Rites*, a comprehensive compilation of rituals for the gay and lesbian community. Kit proved to be a valiant pioneer. One of her most notable innovations was introducing the UFMCC staff to the Internet.

The chief ecumenical officer for the Fellowship, Rev. Wilson describes Kit as "a woman with a brilliant mind and a deep commitment to ecumenical work." She states "I've learned a great deal from Kit and thoroughly enjoyed working with her. I ask the Fellowship to continue to pray for Kit's full recovery. I'm certain that God has more plans for Kit!"

Kit has been suffering from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome since January, 1995. She will be sorely missed, especially by the staff. If you would like to send a card to Rev. Cherry, sent it to UFMCC Headquarters. Kit wants everyone to know how much she has appreciated all the support she felt from friends throughout the world. "I'll never forget organizing such events as Hands Around the God Box, and the Wedding March on Washington. I hope my work will contribute to a more just, more compassionate future."

NOW AVAILABLE! AND IT'S FREE!

The new UFMCC **Resource Center Catalog** is now available at no cost. It features new books by MCC authors, materials for gay and lesbians Christians, and many new offerings!

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Prov., Zip _____

Resource Center 5300 Santa Monica Blvd, Suite 304, Los Angeles 90029
Phone 213/464-5100 Fax 213/464-2123

A FELLOWSHIP OF HISTORY



1977: The First White House Meeting

Recently, Rev. Troy Perry was invited to participate in the White House Conference on HIV and AIDS, hosted by President Bill Clinton.

But that wasn't the first time Rev. Perry has been a guest in Washington D.C. In 1977, fourteen members of lesbian and gay communities nationwide met for the National Gay Task Force White House Conference. Held during the Carter administration, it was coordinated by Midge Costanza, assistant to President Carter for public liaison. The purpose of the gathering was to express grievances to administration officials about the condition of gay and lesbian rights throughout the country. The meeting garnered considerable national publicity to further to cause of rights for gays and lesbians.



KEEPING IN TOUCH FEBRUARY 1996

Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation. *Keeping in Touch* may be freely copied for distribution in UFMCC. Portions may be reprinted in UFMCC church publications, with attribution. For other distribution, please request permission. Subscriptions are free upon request. Send address changes, news and ideas to: *Keeping in Touch*, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd, #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100. Deadline for each issue: 15th of previous month.

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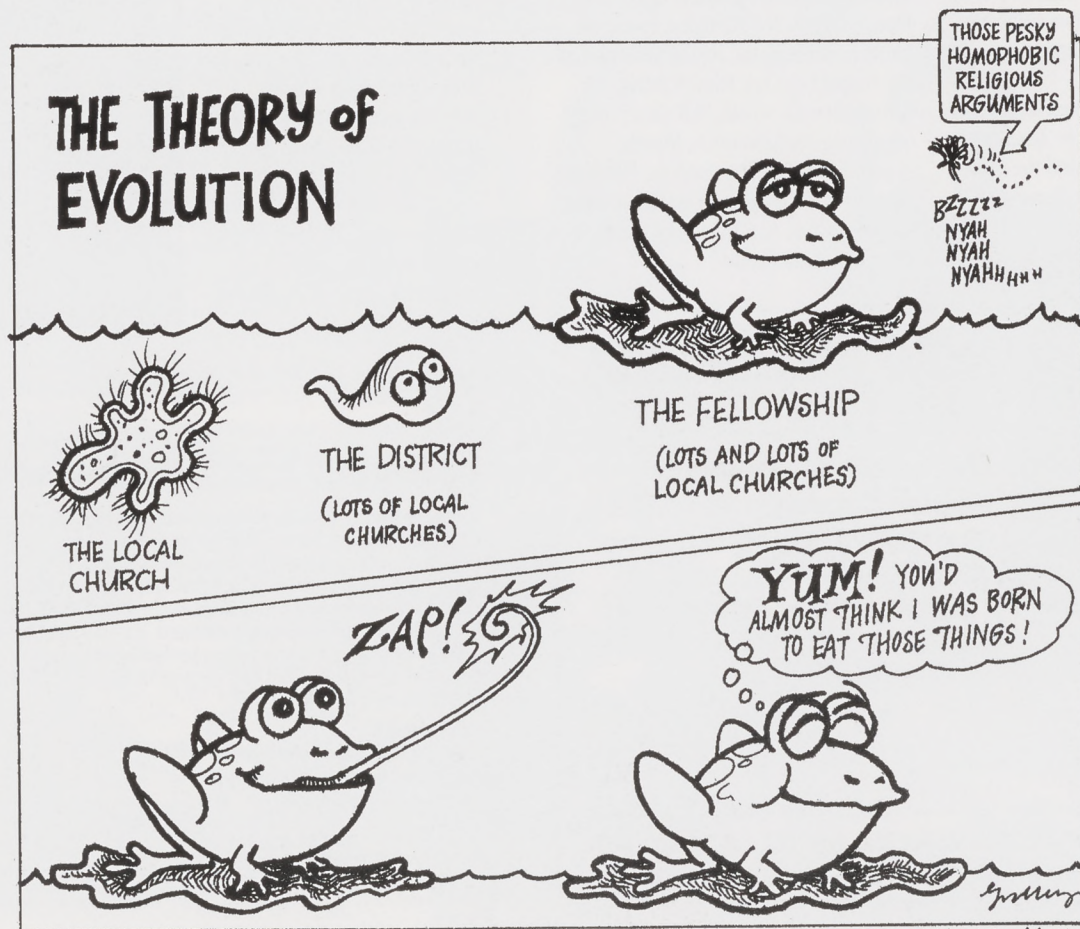
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